

Writing, Grades 2-3

Classroom Management

At the beginning of the year, students' writing sessions may only last for about ten to fifteen minutes before Writing Seminar. But as the year goes on and as they become more experienced writers, students will be able to spend more time on a single writing assignment. Workshop offers the perfect setting for extended work on in-progress writing assignments. Although writing is generally considered part of the language arts block, it can and should be integrated into science, math, and social studies curricula. What is most important is that students write regularly each day.

Ms. Lizarraga has set up her classroom to make group learning convenient and fluid. Note that she has arranged the desks in a way that gives her and her students the ability to move around smoothly and to work with each other easily. She has chart paper and an overhead projector available for taking notes and making lists as a group.

The following tips may prove helpful in creating an atmosphere conducive to writing.

Writing areas do not need to be elaborate. Use shelves for supplies and a small table for publishing. Creating multiple writing areas, one for each specific aspect of the writing process, can help eliminate competition for resources and space (for example, create a materials area, help area, publishing area, reading area, and so on.) Have students help you set up these areas so they feel involved in the creation of their writing spaces and are familiar with the available materials and resources.

Writing Folders, which help students keep their writing organized, are invaluable tools for teacher and student assessments. Students should label each piece of writing with their name, the date, and the focus of the writing process (e.g., planning, revising, and so on). Keep all your students' folders in a file drawer or plastic container in a central location. Student helpers may hand out **Writing Folders** during writing times, and students should feel free to get their folders during Workshop.

A few simple rules, generated with your students, set a positive tone for a supportive and constructive writing atmosphere. Some rules that might be appropriate are:

- Do not interrupt the teacher when the teacher is writing or working with another student.
- Keep the noise level down. Authors are working!
- During writing time, everyone should be involved with a writing-related activity (i.e., planning, drafting, revising, publishing, reading, browsing, researching, using the writing areas, or working with a peer).

Sign-up sheets are useful in the centers, along with a separate set of rules, such as, "Only five people at the center at a time" or "Only whispering is allowed."